



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

THEMIS KLARIDES
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

Testimony in Support of House Bill Number 5629
Judiciary Committee
March 18, 2016

Chairmen Tong and Coleman, Ranking Members Rebimbas and Kissel and Members of the Judiciary Committee, I would like to thank the Committee for raising House Bill Number 5629: An Act Concerning A Diversionary Program For Persons Under Age Twenty-One For Motor Vehicle Violations And Crimes Related To Underage Drinking.

House Bill Number 5629 would provide individuals under the age of twenty-one with a unique opportunity to evaluate the decisions which led to their involvement with the criminal justice system.

House Bill 5629 would allow courts to order, as a condition of probation, an educational program to individuals under the age of twenty-one who have been charged with certain first-time offenses. The program would provide a holistic approach to the issues young individuals are facing by allowing both parents and teens an opportunity to learn and work together. Overseen by a trained and certified facilitator, teens and parents will have the chance to share experiences relating to underage drinking and associated risky behaviors. The goal of this type of programming is to prevent future interactions between these underage individuals and the criminal justice system.

I urge the Judiciary Committee to pass House Bill Number 5629 to provide teenagers with certain first-time offenses a chance to evaluate how the choices they make today impact their future and the lives of others. Please allow the full General Assembly the opportunity to debate this issue and to pass legislation to educate and promote a healthy future for Connecticut's teenagers.